

# Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium: Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Implementation Guide

Prepared with the assistance of  
National Center on Educational Outcomes

December 23, 2013



## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Background.....	4
Resources That Support the Assessment System .....	4
Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).....	6
Design Elements That Support Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations .....	7
Need for a Planned Transition Process.....	8
Overview of Steps for States to Take to Support Implementation .....	8
<b>Step 1: Comparing Previous to New.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Participation Criteria Crosswalk .....	9
Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Crosswalk .....	10
<b>Step 2: Identifying Key Stakeholders .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Who Needs to Make Decisions about Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations? .....	16
Who Needs to Implement the Guidelines? .....	17
Who Needs to Support the Implementation of Guidelines? .....	18
<b>Step 3: Developing Resources for Districts/Schools .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Determining Resources and Delivery Formats for Districts and Schools .....	19
What Resources Might a State Decide to Develop to Meet Specific Needs?.....	20
Developing Resources for Districts and Schools.....	21
Developing Resources for Families.....	21
Measuring the Effectiveness of Resources .....	21
<b>Step 4: Developing and Implementing a Communication Plan.....</b>	<b>22</b>
What Needs to Be Communicated to Districts? .....	22
Who Needs to Be Involved in Communications about the Guidelines to Districts?.....	22
Multiple Methods for Communicating with Districts (and for Districts to Communicate with Schools, Families, and Others) .....	22
Multiple Methods for Schools to Communicate with Districts, and Districts to Communicate with Schools .....	23
Defining Accountability/Responsibility for the Accomplishment of the Plan .....	23
Measuring Effectiveness of the Plan.....	23
<b>Step 5: Developing and Implementing a Training Plan .....</b>	<b>24</b>

Identifying Critical Information and Training Needs.....	24
Involving Critical Audiences .....	24
Setting Up a Timeline .....	24
Designating Training Methods and People .....	25
Implementing the Training.....	26
Evaluating Training Outcomes and Identifying Potential Needs and Resources for Further Training.....	26
<b>Step 6: Checking on Implementation of the Smarter Balanced Guidelines .....</b>	<b>27</b>
What Needs to Be Checked and Why? .....	27
Who Should Check on What? .....	27
Flags for Intervention Needs .....	28
<b>Appendix A: Sample ISAAP .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Appendix B: Participation Criteria for Alternate Assessment on Alternate Achievement Standards (AA- AAS) .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Appendix C: Crosswalk Templates for Participation Criteria Comparisons for States with and without AA-MAS .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Appendix D: Crosswalk Template for Embedded and Non-embedded Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations for Math.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Appendix E: Crosswalk Template for Embedded and Non-embedded Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations for ELA.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Appendix F: Resources for Districts and Schools.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Appendix G: Communications Planning Resources Templates.....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Appendix H: Developing a Timeline for Training.....</b>	<b>67</b>

## Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to provide support for the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium states in their efforts to communicate information to districts and schools for the successful implementation of the Smarter Balanced assessments. States can use any tool included in this document, or modify any tool, as they transition to the new assessment system. Successful implementation will help to ensure that educators and families are confident in the selection and use of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations that promote positive and productive experiences with the Smarter Balanced assessments. Successful implementation will also highlight the connection between needed usability, accessibility, and accommodations approaches in the classroom and during the assessments.

This manual provides states with both (a) clarification of the critical information to convey to districts and schools about the Smarter Balanced document *Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines*, and (b) strategies for ensuring that the information in that document is conveyed to districts and schools. Our use of the terms “districts” and “schools” throughout this guide is intended to be inclusive of all the many entities found throughout Smarter Balanced states, including local education agencies (LEAs) and charter schools.

## Background

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is providing a system of valid, reliable, and fair next-generation assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts (ELA)/literacy and mathematics for grades 3–8 and 11. The system includes summative assessments for accountability purposes, optional interim assessments for local use, and formative tools and processes for instructional use. Computer adaptive testing technologies are used for the summative and interim assessments to provide meaningful feedback and actionable data, which teachers and other stakeholders can use to help students succeed. For more information, visit <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/smarter-balanced-assessments/>.

## Resources That Support the Assessment System

The diversity of students’ needs in Smarter Balanced states is complex. Therefore, the Smarter Balanced Assessment System is also complex. Navigating the system is possible via several supporting resources (see Table 1). The resources are described briefly in this section.

Table 1: Assessment System Implementation Resources

Assessment System Implementation Resource	Appropriate Use of Resource
Accessibility and Accommodations Framework	Use this document to learn more about the foundational principles regarding the resources available in the Smarter Balanced assessments. This document provides information about current best practices; recent advances in assessment, enabled by digital technologies; and recent developments in valid measurement that guided the Consortium throughout test development.
Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines	Use this document for all information related to the provision of resources for students during the assessments. This document will provide the descriptions and recommended uses of each universal tool, designated support, and accommodation currently available for the Smarter Balanced assessments. A member state

Assessment System Implementation Resource	Appropriate Use of Resource
	may elect not to make available to its students any universal tool, designated support, or accommodation that is otherwise included in the Guidelines when the implementation or use of the universal tool, designated support, or accommodation is in conflict with the state's law, regulation, or policy.
Smarter Balanced Assessment Portal	This online portal, <a href="http://sbac.portal.airast.org/">http://sbac.portal.airast.org/</a> , provides a consolidated location for a host of valuable Smarter Balanced administration materials, manuals, guides, and modules in support of the Field Test and beyond.
Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)	Additional information to aid in the implementation of the Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines.
Test Administration Manual	Test administrators will use this document both in preparation for and during assessment events to ensure the valid administration of the Smarter Balanced assessments. This document provides detailed information on the school- and classroom-level administration of the summative assessment.
Test Coordinator Manual	Test coordinators will use this document in preparation for and in support of valid administration of Smarter Balanced assessments. Similar to the Test Administration Manual, this document provides detailed information on the administration of the summative assessment, but from the perspective of those individuals responsible at the systems level.
Individual Student Assessment Accessibility Plan (ISAAP)	Teachers and academic decision-makers, possibly with guardians and students, will use this optional tool to help match individual student needs with the most appropriate available universal tools, designated supports, and/or accommodations, according to their need.
Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE)	TIDE is the online interface that allows qualified adult users to interact with the Smarter Balanced Assessment System to ensure that each student has the correct and appropriate test experience. The system allows for the upload/registration of students according to their grade level and other unique information to ensure appropriate test and item selection and, ultimately, appropriate individual reporting. It also allows adult users to customize the experience as appropriate by selecting or turning off any universal tool, designated support, and/or accommodation as per the Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines.
Professional Development Materials, Digital Library	These additional materials may be used during instruction to support a student's successful testing experience. Materials include training modules and other supporting materials that can help with formative assessment practices for the new Common

Assessment System Implementation Resource	Appropriate Use of Resource
	Core State Standards in English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics.

## *Accessibility and Accommodations Framework.*

Recognizing the diverse characteristics and needs of students who participate in the Smarter Balanced assessments, the Smarter Balanced states worked together, through the Smarter Balanced Test Administration and Student Access Work Group, to develop an Accessibility and Accommodations Framework that guided the Consortium as it worked to reach agreement on the specific universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations available for the assessment. The work group also considered research-based lessons learned about universal design, universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations. The overarching goal of Smarter Balanced is to provide every student with a positive and productive assessment experience, generating results that are a fair and accurate estimate of each student's achievement. State, district, and school staff, parents, policymakers, and other stakeholders can refer to this document to learn more about the underlying research base as well as lessons learned from nearly a decade of testing under the No Child Left Behind Act. The Framework will be posted in early 2014.

## *Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines.*

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium's Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines describe the universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations available for the Smarter Balanced assessments. These guidelines are intended for school-level personnel and decision-making teams, particularly Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams, as they prepare for and implement the Smarter Balanced assessments. The guidelines provide information for classroom teachers, English language development educators, special education teachers, and related services personnel to use in selecting and administering universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations. The guidelines are also intended for assessment staff and administrators who oversee the decisions that are made in instruction and assessment. The guidelines are available at [http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/SmarterBalanced\\_Guidelines\\_091113.pdf](http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/SmarterBalanced_Guidelines_091113.pdf).

## *Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).*

States may use these FAQs to assist districts and schools with transitioning from their former assessments to the Smarter Balanced assessments. In addition, the FAQs may be used by districts to ensure understanding among staff and schools regarding the universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations available for the Smarter Balanced assessments. Schools may use them with decision-making teams (including parents) as decisions are made and implemented with respect to use of the *Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines*.

## *Smarter Balanced Assessment Portal.*

The Smarter Balanced assessment portal at <http://sbac.portal.airast.org/> is the online location of all Smarter Balanced Field Test administration information and materials. All manuals, brochures, and information related to the Field Test are available on the portal.

## *Test Administration Manual.*

The Test Administration Manual (TAM) can be found by accessing the Smarter Balanced assessment portal. The TAM provides step-by-step test administration guidance for those individuals responsible for ensuring the valid assessment of the Smarter Balanced assessments.



It is the responsibility of test coordinators and test administrators to understand and follow the information in the TAM. Classroom teachers, English language development educators, special education teachers, and related services personnel will also find useful information in the TAM.

## *Test Coordinator Manual.*

The Test Coordinator Manual (TCM) can also be found by accessing the Smarter Balanced assessment portal. The TCM provides step-by-step administration and coordination guidance for District and School Test Coordinators who play active roles in managing test administration in their schools. It is the responsibility of these test coordinators to understand and follow the guidance provided in the TCM.

## *Individual Student Assessment Accessibility Profile (ISAAP).*

Specific student assessment needs for the Smarter Balanced Assessment System can be documented in an Individual Student Assessment Accessibility Profile (ISAAP), or in the state's own decision-making process form. A sample ISAAP is provided in Appendix A. The ISAAP (or state-developed form) allows educators and schools to focus on each individual student to document the designated supports and accommodations required to ensure valid results for the assessments administered to students.

## *Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE).*

For each student needing a technology-embedded designated support or accommodation, the specific support or accommodation is documented through the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE). In addition, all universal tools are included in TIDE so that they can be turned off if they are not appropriate for an individual student. This is indicated by the designated support "Turn off Any Universal Tool." TIDE is also used to upload student files and add students. The information that needs to be entered into TIDE is gathered and provided via the ISAAP (or state-developed form) to the individual who is entering information. Each school should develop a strategy for making decisions and for documenting the decisions of teams, especially when decisions are made for students without a formal team (such as an IEP team).

## *Professional Development Materials, Digital Library.*

Smarter Balanced strives to deliver high-quality professional development for its new assessments. The Consortium has prepared a number of professional development materials that can help states in their communication and training efforts. These professional development resources can be accessed through the Formative Assessment/Professional Development Digital Library with a username and password.

## **Design Elements That Support Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations**

Smarter Balanced assessments were developed with the recognition of the diverse characteristics and needs of students who participate in the Smarter Balanced assessments. Through the work of the Smarter Balanced states, an array of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations is available to ensure that students' usability, accessibility, and accommodations needs are met.

- **Universal tools** are access features that are available to all students, based on student preference and selection.
- **Designated supports** for the Smarter Balanced assessments are those features that are available for use by all students (including English language learners [ELLs], students with disabilities, and ELLs with disabilities) for whom the need for support(s) has been indicated by an educator or team of educators (with parent/guardian and student input as appropriate).

- **Accommodations** are changes in procedures or materials that increase equitable access during the Smarter Balanced assessments by generating valid assessment results for students who need them and allowing these students to show what they know and can do. Smarter Balanced states have identified accommodations for students for whom there is documentation of the need for the accommodations in an IEP or 504 plan.

Universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations may be either embedded in the test administration system or provided locally (non-embedded). For more information, see the Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines at [http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/SmarterBalanced\\_Guidelines\\_091113.pdf](http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/SmarterBalanced_Guidelines_091113.pdf).

## Need for a Planned Transition Process

Although district and school staff, as well as parents and students, are familiar with the tests that their states have used in the past, and some schools will have participated in Smarter Balanced pilot testing, for most, this is a new assessment. It is critical to have detailed plans to ensure that the transition to these new assessments is successful.

The transition must begin before the Field Test in Spring 2014. Implementing the Field Test with fidelity helps to ensure that assessment items are accessible to all students and produce results that are valid, reliable, and fair. Further, the Field Test will help ensure that the Smarter Balanced assessment items are placed on an accurate scale to determine student achievement levels. It is important for ELLs, students with disabilities, and ELLs with disabilities to be meaningfully represented in the Field Test administration process, so that their usability, accessibility, and accommodations needs are taken into consideration in future item development and in possible revisions to the Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines.

## Overview of Steps for States to Take to Support Implementation

For effective implementation of Smarter Balanced assessment policies and practices, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium identified six steps for member states to take:

1. Comparing Previous to New
2. Identifying Key Stakeholders
3. Developing Tools for Districts/Schools
4. Developing and Implementing a Communication Plan
5. Developing and Implementing a Training Plan
6. Checking on Implementation of the Smarter Balanced Guidelines

These steps are the focus of this guide.



## Step 1: Comparing Previous to New

Understanding the differences between the previous policies for assessment participation and accommodations, which districts and schools are familiar with, and the new policies for the Smarter Balanced assessments is a very important step in the transition process. This step highlights the possible areas of differences in participation criteria and approaches to usability, accessibility, and accommodations. In each section, ways to convey the differences between previous and new by developing a crosswalk of the two are provided.

### Participation Criteria Crosswalk

All students, except those with significant cognitive disabilities who meet the criteria for the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (approximately 1% or fewer of the student population), are to participate in the Smarter Balanced assessments and meet the same performance expectations (see Appendix B for the participation criteria agreed to by the two alternate assessment consortia). Further, only those ELLs who are enrolled for the first year in a U.S. school may be excused from participation in the English language arts (ELA)/literacy assessment.

To assist your districts, schools, and families with the Smarter Balanced participation criteria, your state can develop a crosswalk matrix of your previous assessments and the Smarter Balanced summative assessments. A general crosswalk format is provided in Table 2. Examples of crosswalk templates for states that did and that did not have an alternate assessment based on modified achievement standards are provided in Appendix C.

Table 2: General Crosswalk Format for States to Compare Previous Participation Criteria and Smarter Balanced Participation Criteria

State's Previous Participation Criteria	Smarter Balanced Participation Criteria	Differences to Note
<p><b>Math general assessment criteria:</b> [state inserts criteria here]</p> <p><b>ELA general assessment criteria:</b> [state inserts criteria here]</p>	<p><b>Math general assessment criteria:</b> all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, except those students with disabilities who are participating in the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards.</p> <p><b>ELA general assessment criteria:</b> all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, except possibly: (a) those students with disabilities who are participating in the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards, and (b) those English language learners who are enrolled for the first year (i.e., fewer than 12 months) in a U.S. school.</p>	

State's Previous Participation Criteria	Smarter Balanced Participation Criteria	Differences to Note
<b>Math alternate assessment criteria:</b> [state inserts criteria here]	<b>Math alternate assessment criteria:</b> [state inserts criteria agreed to by its consortia developing the alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards, or by its own criteria if the state is not part of a consortium]	
<b>ELA alternate assessment criteria:</b> [state inserts criteria here]	<b>ELA alternate assessment criteria:</b> [state inserts criteria agreed to by its consortia developing the alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards, or by its own criteria if the state is not part of a consortium]	

## Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Crosswalk

In the past, states have had different approaches to usability, accessibility, and accommodations for their assessments of ELA and mathematics. Even if your state has had a computer-based assessment, the new Smarter Balanced computer-based assessments create an opportunity to rethink how usability, accessibility, and accommodations policies are framed and communicated. The Smarter Balanced assessment features (including universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations) show great promise for improving the assessment experience for all students. To be most beneficial for students, universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations should be used consistently in instruction and for assessments.

States in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium have agreed to a set of usability, accessibility, and accommodations guidelines. This is likely to mean that some past practices no longer apply and that new ones have been added. It is important for states to identify the differences between the previous and new for districts and schools. Ensuring that districts and schools have ways to communicate to their educators and decision-makers, including families, will be important as well. This latter goal is the focus of the following steps in this guide. A member state may elect not to make available to its students any universal tool, designated support, or accommodation that is otherwise included in the guidelines when the implementation or use of the universal tool, designated support, or accommodation is in conflict with the state's law, regulation, or policy.

Smarter Balanced identified three aspects of its policies—universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations—with each having both embedded and non-embedded versions. These three aspects can be the basis for the first crosswalk that your state creates. It is recommended that this crosswalk address terminology changes. Table 3 provides a general crosswalk template for this purpose. Note that it is recommended that the Smarter Balanced terminology appear in the left-most column; then your state's terminology can be added in the next column, followed by a column for comments on differences.

Table 3: Crosswalk Format for States to Compare New Terminology to Previous Terminology Related to Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations

Smarter Balanced Terminology	State's Previous Terminology [example entries]	Differences to Note
<b>Universal Tools:</b> access features of the assessment; these are available to all students based on student preference and selection	[e.g., <b>Best Practices</b> (provide state definition)]	
<b>Designated Supports:</b> features that are available for use by any student for whom the need for support(s) has been indicated by an educator (or team of educators with parent/guardian and student)	[e.g., <b>Accommodations</b> (provide state definition)]	
<b>Accommodations:</b> changes in procedures or materials that increase equitable access during the assessment for students who need them and for whom there is documentation on an IEP or 504 plan	[e.g., <b>Accommodations</b> (provide state definition)]	
[no similar term in <i>Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines</i> ]	[e.g., <b>Modifications</b> (provide state definition)]	

Figure 1 presents the matrix of specific universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations for the Smarter Balanced assessments. The information in this figure, along with the footnotes that follow it, can provide the basis for developing crosswalks of the previous and new.

Figure 1: Summary of Smarter Balanced Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations

	Universal Tools	Designated Supports	Accommodations
Embedded	Breaks Calculator <sup>1</sup> Digital Notepad English Dictionary <sup>2</sup> English Glossary Expandable Passages Global Notes Highlighter Keyboard Navigation Mark for Review Math Tools <sup>3</sup> Spell Check <sup>4</sup> Strikethrough Writing Tools <sup>5</sup> Zoom	Color Contrast Masking Text-to-Speech <sup>6</sup> Translated Test Directions <sup>7</sup> Translations (Glossary) <sup>8</sup> Translations (Stacked) <sup>9</sup> Turn off Any Universal Tools	American Sign Language <sup>10</sup> Braille Closed Captioning <sup>11</sup> Text-to-Speech <sup>12</sup>
Non-embedded	Breaks English Dictionary <sup>13</sup> Scratch Paper Thesaurus <sup>14</sup>	Bilingual Dictionary <sup>15</sup> Color Contrast Color Overlay Magnification Read Aloud Scribe <sup>16</sup> Separate Setting Translations (Glossary) <sup>17</sup>	Abacus Alternate Response Options <sup>18</sup> Calculator <sup>19</sup> Multiplication Table <sup>20</sup> Print on Demand Read Aloud Scribe Speech-to-Text

\*Items shown are available for ELA and Math unless otherwise noted.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> For calculator-allowed items only

<sup>2</sup> For ELA performance task full-writes

<sup>3</sup> Includes embedded ruler, embedded protractor

<sup>4</sup> For ELA items

<sup>5</sup> Includes bold, italic, underline, indent, cut, paste, spell check, bullets, undo/redo.

<sup>6</sup> For ELA items (not reading passages) and math items

<sup>7</sup> For math items

<sup>8</sup> For math items

<sup>9</sup> For math test

<sup>10</sup> For ELA listening items and math items

<sup>11</sup> For ELA listening items

<sup>12</sup> For ELA reading passages grades 6-8 and 11

<sup>13</sup> For ELA performance task full-writes

<sup>14</sup> For ELA performance task full-writes

<sup>15</sup> For ELA performance task full-writes

<sup>16</sup> For ELA non-writing items and math items

<sup>17</sup> For math items

<sup>18</sup> Includes adapted keyboards, large keyboards, StickyKeys, MouseKeys, FilterKeys, adapted mouse, touch screen, head wand, and switches.

<sup>19</sup> For calculator-allowed items only

<sup>20</sup> For math items beginning in grade 4.

Table 4 provides a general format that states can use for creating a crosswalk of the Smarter Balanced embedded universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations for mathematics. Note that it is recommended to list the accommodations first, followed by the designated supports, followed by the universal tools. A similar format can be used for the non-embedded universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations for mathematics. (See Appendix D for the complete

crosswalk templates for embedded and non-embedded universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations.) Because of the number of entries, when both content areas and both embedded and non-embedded items are included, it is recommended that they be separated, but if desired, they could be combined.

Table 4: General Crosswalk Format for States to Compare Smarter Balanced Embedded Accommodations, Designated Supports, and Universal Tools with States' Previous Policies in Math

Smarter Balanced Accommodations, Designated Supports, and Universal Tools	State's Previous Similar Policy	Differences to Note
<b>Accommodations</b>		
<b>American Sign Language (ASL):</b> allowed for math items in their entirety; test content is translated into ASL video; ASL human signer and the signed test content are viewed on the same screen		
<b>Braille:</b> raised dot code that individuals read with the fingertips		
<b>Designated Supports</b>		
<b>Color Contrast:</b> screen background and/or font color can be adjusted, based on student needs or preferences		
<b>Masking:</b> content that is not of immediate need or that may be distracting to the student is blocked off		
<b>Continue with remaining designated supports (see Appendix D for full crosswalk template)</b>		
<b>Universal Tools</b>		
<b>Breaks:</b> number of items per session is flexibly defined		
<b>Calculator:</b> an on-screen digital calculator for calculator-allowed items only		
<b>Continue with remaining universal tools (see Appendix D for full crosswalk template)</b>		

Table 5 provides a general format that might be used for creating a crosswalk of the Smarter Balanced embedded universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations for ELA. (See Appendix E for the complete crosswalk templates for embedded and non-embedded universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations.) Note that it is recommended to list the accommodations first, followed by the designated supports, followed by the universal tools. An alternative approach is to divide them into three tables (one for accommodations, one for designated supports, and one for universal tools); dividing the tables shown here as Tables 3 and 4 might make the information included in them easier to digest.

Table 5: General Crosswalk Format for States to Compare Smarter Balanced Embedded Accommodations, Designated Supports, and Universal Tools with States' Previous Policies in ELA

Smarter Balanced Accommodations, Designated Supports, and Universal Tools	State's Previous Similar Policy	Differences to Note
<b>Accommodations</b>		
<b>American Sign Language (ASL):</b> allowed for listening items only; test content is translated into ASL video; ASL human signer and the signed test content are viewed on the same screen		
<b>Braille:</b> raised dot code that individuals read with the fingertips		
<b>Closed Captioning:</b> allowed for listening items; printed text appears on the computer screen as audio materials are presented		
<b>Continue with remaining accommodations (see Appendix E for full crosswalk template)</b>		
<b>Designated Supports</b>		
<b>Color Contrast:</b> screen background or font color can be adjusted, based on student needs or preferences		
<b>Masking:</b> content that is not of immediate need or that may be distracting to the student is blocked off		
<b>Continue with remaining designated supports (see Appendix E for full crosswalk template)</b>		



Smarter Balanced Accommodations, Designated Supports, and Universal Tools	State's Previous Similar Policy	Differences to Note
<b>Universal Tools</b>		
<b>Breaks:</b> number of items per session is flexibly defined		
<b>Digital Notepad:</b> an item-specific tool that is used for making notes about an item		
<b>Continue with remaining universal tools (see Appendix E for full crosswalk template)</b>		

## Step 2: Identifying Key Stakeholders

Smarter Balanced emphasizes the accessibility of its assessments, and, in doing so, has opened up universal tools and designated supports to all students, not just students with disabilities. With this more inclusive thinking, new approaches should be implemented to determine which students need which universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations.

Therefore, it is important to think about the key stakeholders in this shift. Three areas for consideration here are: (1) who needs to make decisions about universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations; (2) who needs to implement the guidelines; and (3) who needs to support the implementation of guidelines. These three areas are addressed in this step.

### Who Needs to Make Decisions about Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations?

Districts and schools in most states have depended on IEP teams to make decisions about accommodations for students with disabilities who are receiving special education services, and on educators or administrators to make decisions about accommodations for English language learners (ELLs) and students with 504 plans.

The *Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines* expand the number of individuals making decisions about universal tools and designated supports, just as the avenues to access for all students have been expanded through the universal tools and designated supports. Thus, as states consider how to ensure that the guidelines are implemented as intended, the number of potential decision-makers who need to receive communications about making decisions must be expanded.

The guidelines explicitly indicate that **universal tools** are available to all students. Test administrators and educators preparing students for testing need to be aware that this is the case. It is important that, as soon as possible, clear communication is sent to all administrators and educators about universal tools. This information should also be available to families upon request or included in any discussions about statewide assessment.

**Designated supports** are available to all students, but require explicit actions by an adult (or team) for an individual student. Although Smarter Balanced encourages schools to use a team approach to make decisions about each individual student's designated supports, ultimately an adult is responsible for these decisions and for entering the supports into TIDE or another state-designated platform. Educators must understand that students may use the designated supports only when an adult (or team) has specifically indicated that the student needs selected supports and has ensured that the supports are entered into TIDE or the state-designated platform.

Educators will need to be trained in how to make decisions about designated supports, including being aware that it is important not to select too many designated supports for a student because too many unneeded designated supports can interfere with optimal student performance. Educators making decisions about designated supports also will need to be familiar with the student's characteristics and needs, because this information is critical for making effective decisions about needed designated supports. Ideas for resources that states and others can create to help with this decision-making process are provided in Step 3.

If your state has school-based teams or ELL teams, these should also be considered when developing all training materials and processes. These teams will be valuable in ensuring that multiple perspectives are brought to bear on the characteristics and needs of students and in making decisions about needed designated supports.

For students with disabilities, decisions about **accommodations** as well as designated supports will be made by the IEP team or the 504 team. These teams should always seek information from others.

It is important to note that the team approach encouraged by Smarter Balanced does not require the formation of a new decision-making team and that the structure of teams can vary widely depending on the background and needs of a student. An IEP or 504 team, or a locally convened student support team, can inform the ISAAP or other state-designated processes. For most students who do not require accommodations, an initial decision about needed designated supports by a teacher may be confirmed by a second person (potentially the student or the student's parent/guardian). In contrast, for a student who is an ELL and also has been identified as having one or more disabilities, the IEP team should include the English language development specialist who works with the student, along with other required IEP team members and the student, as appropriate. The composition of teams is not defined by Smarter Balanced; it is subject to state and federal requirements but otherwise is under the control of each district.

Regardless of whether a formal team process is used, access and fairness depend on decision-makers having knowledge about:

- the Common Core State Standards;
- the Smarter Balanced assessment targets; and
- ways of collaborating with other educational stakeholders for successful student access.

### Who Needs to Implement the Guidelines?

The implementation of the Smarter Balanced guidelines starts at the state level, through effective communication about the *Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines* to districts and schools. Identifying who needs to be involved in districts and schools is also the responsibility of the state.

For districts, communication likely needs to be with several offices, each with a targeted message. Some examples are:

- Superintendent's office—to ensure that the superintendent and staff know about the changes in policies
- Assessment office—to provide training on the guidelines
- Curriculum and instruction office—to ensure that all staff are aware of the new guidelines
- Special education office—to provide information about accommodations and implications of the new policies for IEP team procedures and forms as mentioned in the guidelines
- ELL/Title III office—to provide information about language supports in the guidelines

Each state should develop a list of who needs to receive information and the specific nature of information each party needs to receive.

At the school level, the following professionals should be involved in the implementation process:

- special education teachers or 504 committee representatives
- language educators and facilitators (ESL/bilingual teacher[s], another ESL/bilingual/migrant teacher or ELL administrator, language acquisition specialist, interpreter)
- assessment officials (test administrator[s], guidance counselor, reading specialist)

- general education teachers (classroom/content teacher[s])
- school psychologists
- first/native language special education practitioners
- school administrators (principal, school/district official[s])
- parent(s)/guardian(s)
- students

Implementation efforts should also include assessment, special education, Title III, and curriculum and instruction specialists. These individuals will be able to establish collaborative networks that facilitate the implementation process.

### **Who Needs to Support the Implementation of Guidelines?**

States can pursue different avenues of support for the implementation of the *Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines*. Included among these avenues are families, the community at large, and higher education institutions.

Families can be a critical source of support. Working through parent/teacher organizations can facilitate this source of support.

Other important support can come from the greater community, including businesses. Ensuring that the greater community understands the new assessment policies and practices will reduce unexpected concerns being voiced after the assessments have been administered.

Thinking innovatively about sources of support for the implementation of the guidelines can help stakeholders to reduce burden on the state. For example, enlisting faculty and staff in higher education institutions to help develop training materials is one possibility. Requesting the inclusion of information in the guidelines is another possibility.

### Step 3: Developing Resources for Districts/Schools

Providing districts, schools, educators, and families with concrete resources can help to ensure that the Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines for the Smarter Balanced assessments are implemented as intended. In most states, implementation of the Smarter Balanced assessments is a significant shift from past state assessment practices. This means that district and school leaders, educators, and teams of decision-makers will need to quickly become familiar with the new assessments and guidelines. Creating resources that meet their needs can go a long way to ensuring that these individuals know the new assessments and are confident about their decision-making.

Step 3 provides strategies for identifying needed resources and formats for delivery of these resources to districts and schools across a state. This step also suggests resources for states to consider developing to support their districts and schools during and after the transition from the former state assessments to the new Smarter Balanced assessments. Templates for some of these resources are provided in this guide, along with suggestions for organizations with which to partner in the development of some resources.

Because of the importance of parents in the successful implementation of the *Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines*, this step also provides ideas for the development of resources for families. Several possible resources are suggested, with examples included.

These resources are only as good as the extent to which they promote and support the implementation of the guidelines. To ensure that the resources that a state develops are effective for these purposes, this step provides suggestions for ways to evaluate the effectiveness of the resources.

#### Determining Resources and Delivery Formats for Districts and Schools

Identifying who needs resources to support the implementation of the *Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines* should be done before jumping into developing or adopting resources. A formal needs assessment is one way to do this, although it will require time to survey districts about their needs. A state that lacks time to do this might rely on its past experiences related to usability, accessibility, and accommodations interactions with its districts and schools. State staff should think about questions such as:

- What questions have our districts most frequently asked of the state about its accommodations policies?

*For example, has the state received many requests about how IEP teams should be documenting accommodations on the IEP that are not allowed by the assessment?*

- What types of issues have emerged in analyses of our state's data on the use of accommodations?

*For example, does the number of students using accommodations differ dramatically from one district to another, or from one school to another? What are our state's current means for distributing information to districts? Does this current distribution method reach the people who need to know this information, given that the system is online?*

- What kinds of concerns have been raised by administrators, teachers, school psychologists, parents, or others about the accessibility of the current statewide assessments or the accommodations that are currently available?

*For example, are most questions being raised by parents rather than schools?*

The answers to these kinds of questions can inform the content of resources that are needed, the audiences that are most in need of resources, and the possible platforms for resource delivery (e.g., in-person training, web-based supports, pamphlets).

## What Resources Might a State Decide to Develop to Meet Specific Needs?

Resources can support several implementation goals that are based on state-identified needs. Table 6 shows some possible resources that might be developed to meet specific needs.

Table 6: Possible Resources to Meet Specific Needs

Identified Need	Possible Resources	Possible Delivery Platforms
Familiarity with basic Smarter Balanced policies and how they relate to state's previous policies	Crosswalk of State and Smarter Balanced Policies Glossary of Terms	Website Resource (see Resource 10)
Process for adults to identify student needs for designated supports	Identifying Classroom Supports	Website Resource (see Resources 1, 2, and 3)
Student awareness of usability, accessibility, and accommodations features of new Smarter Balanced assessments	Student Perspective Input	Website Resource (see Resource 4)
Parent input into IEP or 504 plans for accommodations	Parent Perspective Input	Website Resource (see Resource 5)
Data-based decisions about needed designated supports and accommodations	Data Collection Form	Website Resource (see Resources 6 and 7)
Logistics planning and support		Website Resource (see Resource 8)
Evaluation of effectiveness of resources used		Website Resource (see Resource 9)
Continue with state-identified needs		

## Sample Resources.

Appendix F includes samples of the resources<sup>1</sup> identified in Table 6.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from *Accommodations Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of English Language Learners with Disabilities*. Washington, DC: Assessing Special Education Students and English Language Learners State Collaboratives on Assessment and Student Standards, Council of Chief State School Officers. Available at [http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Publications/Accommodations\\_Manual\\_-\\_How\\_to\\_Select\\_Administer\\_and\\_Evaluate\\_Use\\_of\\_Accommodations\\_for\\_Instruction\\_and\\_Assessment\\_of\\_students\\_with\\_Disabilities.html](http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Publications/Accommodations_Manual_-_How_to_Select_Administer_and_Evaluate_Use_of_Accommodations_for_Instruction_and_Assessment_of_students_with_Disabilities.html)



## Developing Resources for Districts and Schools

### *Making Resources Specific to Your State.*

The *Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines* were developed for the Consortium; each state will want to design district and school resources that reflect the state. This can be accomplished by using state logos along with the Smarter Balanced logos.

### *Who Can Help Develop Resources.*

Many individuals within each Consortium state are committed to the successful implementation of the *Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines*. These individuals can assist with the design and development of the resources that are generated to ensure the successful implementation of the Smarter Balanced assessments. Consider using an existing educator committee or convening an ad hoc committee for assistance. Also, consider contacting institutions of higher education, educational service units, and districts for assistance with the identification of needed resources as well as with the development and review of the resources.

## Developing Resources for Families

Students' families should be continuously informed about the new Smarter Balanced assessments and usability, accessibility, and accommodations policies that are part of these assessments, since families are major stakeholders in their children's education processes. Family input is critical to proper identification of students' usability, accessibility, and accommodations needs. Families' perceptions of what universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations are most effective for and most preferred by their children can inform decision-making in preparations for the test administration.

Resources for families should incorporate questions about recommended universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations and their frequency and combinations of use in the home environment. Possible types of resources could include policy summaries, summaries of recent developments, tips for families, questionnaires, forms, etc. Resources for families should avoid excessive terminology and should be made available in a variety of families' native languages.

## Measuring the Effectiveness of Resources

In the process of distribution of educational resources, it is important to collect feedback from intended audiences on the level of effectiveness of these resources. Effective resources are adaptable, easy to access and understand, appropriate for each given audience, easy to remember and reference, and visually appealing. To measure the effectiveness of resources, electronic or paper evaluations can be collected when these resources are shared with audiences. Alternatively, three to four recipients of resources can be interviewed about their reactions to those materials. Another productive method of measuring effectiveness involves testing a sample of readers about the content and format of each resource. It is also important to provide resources in multiple formats and to keep them updated so that they reflect the most current information in the usability, accessibility, and accommodations domain.

## Step 4: Developing and Implementing a Communication Plan

Developing a clear and comprehensive communication plan will help to ensure that the critical information that needs to be conveyed about the implementation of the *Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines* is conveyed to the people who need the information. This step describes what states can do to develop and implement their own communication plans. It covers (1) what needs to be communicated to districts; (2) who needs to be involved in communications about the guidelines to districts; (3) multiple methods for districts and schools to communicate; (4) defining accountability/responsibility for the accomplishment of the plan; and (5) measuring effectiveness of the plan.

### What Needs to Be Communicated to Districts?

Smarter Balanced is building assessments that are based on a framework of accessibility for all students, including English language learners (ELLs), students with disabilities, and ELLs with disabilities. Smarter Balanced recognizes that the validity of assessment results depends on each and every student having appropriate universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations.

A Communications Plan can provide a roadmap for disseminating important information and materials to districts. District and school staff will need to understand how the decision-making process and supporting information in the Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines can be used to select universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations for the Smarter Balanced assessments. Clarity of message is critical. Designating a single point of contact and developing a way for all internal staff to understand and communicate the same message are important aspects of a strong plan. The Communications Plan should include goals, activities, timelines, and who is responsible for each item.

The process of communicating with districts is not a one-shot event, but is a continuing process that provides additional information and resources as the Smarter Balanced assessments are rolled out and implemented. Districts will need information about both major and minor details. Your state should be prepared to carry out parts of the Communications Plan at critical points as the Smarter Balanced assessments are rolled out. A template of a Communications Planning Resource is provided in Appendix G.

### Who Needs to Be Involved in Communications about the Guidelines to Districts?

Districts need to receive accurate, consistent, and coherent information about the Smarter Balanced guidelines. Several different agencies have important information and knowledge that should be incorporated into the Communications Plan. Leads from your state's assessment, special education, Title III, and curriculum and instruction divisions will need to work together to create a comprehensive Communications Plan.

### Multiple Methods for Communicating with Districts (and for Districts to Communicate with Schools, Families, and Others)

District and school leaders and IEP team members need to have the training, resources, tools, and information to successfully use the Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines for decision-making. Multiple methods of communication should be incorporated to support training and learning needs. Methods of communication may include:

- Posting resources, awareness information, and “how to” documents on your state's website
- Holding teleconferences and webinars
- Holding in-person trainings

- Using a train-the-trainer approach
- Facilitating Communities of Practice (CoPs)
- Disseminating information and responding to questions via blogs and other social media

## **Multiple Methods for Schools to Communicate with Districts, and Districts to Communicate with Schools**

So that your state can continuously improve how it communicates information, it is vital to know what in the communication process is working and what is not working. Communication is not a one-way street. A high-quality Communications Plan describes both formal and informal processes that schools and districts can use to get additional information, ask questions, and make comments. To ensure that your state has planned for this two-way communication, it may be helpful to have a Communications Interaction Plan. Appendix G provides a template for this resource.

## **Defining Accountability/Responsibility for the Accomplishment of the Plan**

A high-quality Communication Plan includes deliverables and timelines, and lists those responsible for carrying out the various activities. In order to evaluate whether a Communication Plan has accomplished this purpose, appropriate goals need to be identified. Some possible goals to consider are:

- All educators understand that universal tools are part of the assessment.
- All educators understand that designated supports are available to all students, but that an adult (or team) must identify and document the student's need for the designated support.
- All students have access to the accommodations on their IEP or 504 plan.
- All IEP members know when to revise a student's IEP due to implementation of the *Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines*.
- At least 90% of surveyed teachers believe that they can confidently make, implement, and evaluate usability, accessibility, and accommodations decisions.

States should add other appropriate goals and replace ones that are not appropriate.

## **Measuring Effectiveness of the Plan**

Because a communication plan represents a specific point in time, it is important to periodically review the plan; there may be a need for refinement, adjustments, and revisions. A high-quality Communication Plan includes a process for receiving useful and timely feedback that will both highlight what is working well and identify areas of concern. The plan should identify measures that will indicate whether districts and schools are getting the information they need in ways that support the usability, accessibility, and accommodations decision-making process.

## Step 5: Developing and Implementing a Training Plan

Having a strong plan for providing training to districts and schools is an essential step in the process of bringing the information in the Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines to the field. To address this topic, Step 5 includes ways to identify critical information and training needs, involve critical audiences, set up a timeline, designate training methods and people, implement the training, and evaluate training outcomes.

### Identifying Critical Information and Training Needs

States must determine what information needs to be communicated, through training, to key decision-making stakeholders. Providing the right level of information for stakeholders is important for decision-makers to feel confident in making the right decisions about designated supports and accommodations for students who are taking Smarter Balanced assessments. Conducting a needs assessment can help determine what information your state's stakeholders are in most need of learning through training.

### Involving Critical Audiences

In planning for training, an important consideration is whom your state's critical audiences are. Who needs training on usability, accessibility, and accommodations? Your state may routinely provide training or informational updates on accessibility and accommodations. The implementation of Smarter Balanced assessments in your state presents an opportunity to examine your training approach and critical audiences and make adjustments, if needed.

Smarter Balanced recommends that training includes such key stakeholders as general educators, special educators, English language development educators, assessment coordinators, test administrators, school psychologists, and parents.

Training is most successful when the participants, or the critical audiences in your state, believe that their needs are being addressed when the information is needed most. As previously mentioned, a needs assessment can help involve critical audiences, from the planning stages on, to ensure that their needs are being addressed.

### Setting Up a Timeline

Establishing a timeline for training is critical in ensuring that stakeholders receive training in advance of when they will need to use the information. Key questions to ask related to training timelines include the following:

- When are Smarter Balanced assessments given in my state?
- When do decision-makers typically hold IEP team meetings?
- What format will the training use (e.g., in-person, webinar)?

It is important to plan the training well in advance of when decision-makers will need to hold IEP team meetings so that all decision-makers can receive the training necessary to make informed decisions. If your state has previously provided training on accessibility and accommodations, it will be important to consider whether your previous timeline will work with the timeline for administering Smarter Balanced assessments.

There are other timeline considerations. Trainings must be accessible to all participating educators, parents, and other participants. For example, if trainings are held in person, planning for trainings at multiple locations throughout the state may need to be factored into the timeline. In-person trainings must be planned around educators' work schedules, with ample time to plan for substitute teachers. When in-person trainings include parents, timing should address needs for arranging time off of work.

and/or child care. Web-based trainings need to be provided in ways that will ensure that all participants have access to necessary content, tools, and other resources.

Table 7 illustrates steps in putting together a timeline for implementing a training plan. Such a tool can be adapted from word-processing or spreadsheet programs. See Appendix H for a worksheet that can be used in planning a training timeline.

Table 7: Steps in Putting Together a Timeline for Implementing a Training Plan

---

**Activity** (for each activity, indicate a start and end date and any other important notes)

---

Begin planning the training

Determine the audience for the training

Decide what information needs to be conveyed by the training

Decide on date(s) and (if needed) location(s) for the training

Develop training content

Prepare needed materials (for in-person training)

Convene the training event

Evaluate the training

Administer Smarter Balanced assessments

---

## Designating Training Methods and People

Trainings are most effective when the methods are appropriate to the content of the training and the experience level of the participants. In preparing to provide training on usability, accessibility, and accommodations for Smarter Balanced assessments, consider what format your state's previous trainings have taken. Will previous formats be effective in communicating the components of decision-making related to usability, accessibility, and accommodations for Smarter Balanced assessments?

An effective training will also address diverse learners and include multiple methods of communicating information (e.g., print-based as well as auditory, opportunities for reflection and hands-on practice). For participants who have limited experience providing universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations for Smarter Balanced assessments, an in-person training may allow for question-and-answer formats that can correct potential misunderstandings on the spot. For more experienced participants, a web-based training or webinar may be sufficient.

## Implementing the Training

Conveying the training to those who need it includes making sure that critical audiences have information about the training in sufficient time to plan to attend or plan for the training. For in-person trainings, implementation includes establishing a meeting location and attending to travel logistics for participants. In addition, those leading an in-person training should make sure that there are enough training materials for those who are attending the event.

For web-based trainings, communicating expectations for where, when, and how the training should be accessed is key. Also, having technical support available to troubleshoot for participants who have technical challenges in accessing the training is essential.

## Evaluating Training Outcomes and Identifying Potential Needs and Resources for Further Training

Training on usability, accessibility, and accommodations has both short-term and long-term outcomes. In evaluating short-term outcomes, it will be important to consider whether or not participants believe that the information provided in the training was sufficient, that their questions were answered, and that the training methods were conducive to participant learning. Long-term outcome evaluation should focus on improved decision-making related to usability, accessibility, and accommodations. In examining long-term outcomes, states may want to pay attention to overall rates of students using universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations and types of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations used. Interviews with members of decision-making teams, including students who use universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations, may serve to identify potential needs and resources for further training.

As Smarter Balanced assessments are implemented in your state, it will be important to evaluate the effectiveness of training in ensuring that decision-makers have the information they need in order to make effective decisions for students who need designated supports and accommodations in your state.



## Step 6: Checking on Implementation of the Smarter Balanced Guidelines

After your state has devoted considerable effort and resources to ensure that districts and schools are implementing the *Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines* as intended, it will be important to check on the implementation of the guidelines. Doing so will help your state identify whether there are any additional implementation needs. Step 6 addresses what needs to be checked and for what reasons; who needs to check on what parts of the process; and what flags may point to intervention needs.

### What Needs to Be Checked and Why?

In order to facilitate successful implementation of Smarter Balanced assessment processes in your state, educators at each level (state, district, school) should consider the following steps:

- Becoming familiar with Smarter Balanced assessment policies;
- Including all students in large-scale assessment;
- Documenting decisions related to students' usability, accessibility, and accommodations needs;
- Providing universal tools and selecting and administering designated supports and accommodations depending on students' individual needs;
- Documenting the use of designated supports in students' ISAAPs, or other appropriate documents, and documenting the use of accommodations in students' IEPs;
- Evaluating the effectiveness of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations; and
- Making decisions based on evaluation results.

Additional consideration should be given to test security and ethical practices when administering Smarter Balanced assessments.

### Who Should Check on What?

Stakeholders in your state need to be aware of their responsibilities, depending on their levels of decision-making, to support effective implementation of Smarter Balanced guidelines. Table 8 highlights core responsibilities of stakeholders at each level. Stakeholders should keep in mind that the lists of responsibilities in Table 8 are not exhaustive lists, and additional responsibilities should be considered depending on the context of your state.

Table 8: Responsibilities of Decision-Makers

Decision-Makers	Responsibilities
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating with Smarter Balanced, as well as with schools and districts, about usability, accessibility, and accommodations policies and practices</li> <li>• Providing resources for districts and schools</li> <li>• Identifying professional development needs in districts and schools</li> <li>• Collecting, analyzing, and reporting data on universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations</li> </ul>

Decision-Makers	Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suggesting policy and practice improvements, if necessary, based on your state findings</li> </ul>
Education agencies; higher education institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing resources for consortia, states, districts, schools, and communities</li> <li>Identifying needs for research focused on usability, accessibility, and accommodations</li> <li>Offering professional development opportunities and resources</li> <li>Preparing qualified professionals</li> </ul>
Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicating with schools and the state about usability, accessibility, and accommodations needs</li> <li>Overseeing administration of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations</li> <li>Evaluating effectiveness of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations on the district level</li> <li>Collecting, analyzing, and reporting data to the state</li> <li>Addressing professional development needs in schools</li> </ul>
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying usability, accessibility, and accommodations needs</li> <li>Allowing sufficient time for students to practice working with universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations</li> <li>Administering universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations</li> <li>Evaluating effectiveness of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations on the school level</li> <li>Making improvements, if necessary, to the use of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations</li> </ul>

## Flags for Intervention Needs

When implementing *Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines*, your state should be mindful of the fact that universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations practices need to be customized to address individual students' needs. This section addresses some flags for intervention needs that may arise, depending on each particular assessment context. Usability, accessibility, and accommodations information can be analyzed in different ways. Here are some questions to guide data analysis at the school and district level.

1. Are there policies in place to ensure ethical testing practices, the standardized administration of Smarter Balanced assessments, and that test security practices are followed before, during, and after the day of the test?
2. Are there procedures in place to ensure that test administration procedures are not compromised with the provision of designated supports and accommodations?

3. Are students receiving designated supports as documented in the ISAAP and TIDE and accommodations as documented in their IEP and 504 plans?
4. Are there procedures in place to ensure that test administrators adhere to directions for the implementation of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations?
5. How many students are receiving designated supports and accommodations?
6. What types of designated supports and accommodations are provided, and are some used more than others?
7. How well do students who receive universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations perform on Smarter Balanced and local assessments? If students are not meeting the expected level of performance, is it due to students not having had access to the necessary instruction, not receiving universal tools, designated supports, or accommodations, or using universal tools, designated supports, or accommodations that were not effective?

The following questions can be used to formatively evaluate the universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations used at the student level.

1. What universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations are used by the student during Smarter Balanced assessments?
2. What are the results of assessments when universal tools, designated supports, or accommodations are used versus when they are not used? If a student did not meet the expected level of performance, is it due to the student not having access to the necessary instruction, not receiving universal tools, designated supports, or accommodations, or using universal tools, designated supports, or accommodations that were not effective?
3. What is the student's perception of how well the universal tools, designated supports, or accommodations worked?
4. What combinations of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations seem to be effective?
5. What are the difficulties encountered in the use of universal tools, designated supports, or accommodations?
6. What are the perceptions of teachers and others about how the universal tool, designated support, or accommodation appears to be working?
7. How have the characteristics of the student changed over time to warrant a plan or designated support or accommodation change?

School- and district-level questions can be addressed by a committee responsible for continuous improvement efforts, while the student-level questions need to be considered by an informed adult or IEP or 504 team. It is critical to stress that formative evaluation is not the responsibility of just one individual; the entire team should contribute to the information-gathering and decision-making processes.

## Appendix A:

### Sample ISAAP

*Will add ISAAP tool sample here. It is currently under development.*

## Appendix B:

### Participation Criteria for Alternate Assessment on Alternate Achievement Standards (AA-AAS)

**The criteria for participation in the [NCSC Alternate Assessment] reflect the pervasive nature of a significant cognitive disability. All content areas should be considered when determining eligibility for this assessment.**

In addition, evidence for the decision for participating in the Alternate Assessment is **not based** on:

1. A disability category or label
2. Poor attendance or extended absences
3. Native language/social/cultural or economic difference
4. Expected poor performance on the general education assessment
5. Academic and other services student receives
6. Educational environment or instructional setting
7. Percent of time receiving special education
8. English language learner (ELL) status
9. Low reading level/achievement level
10. Anticipated disruptive behavior
11. Impact of student scores on accountability system
12. Administrator decision
13. Anticipated emotional duress
14. Need for accommodations (e.g., assistive technology/AAC) to participate in assessment process

Participation Criteria	Participation Criteria Descriptors	Agree (Yes) or Disagree (No); Provide Documentation for Each
1. The student has a significant cognitive disability	Reviews of student records indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior.  <i>*Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.</i>	Yes / No
2. The student is learning content linked to (derived from) the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)	Goals and instruction listed in the IEP for this student are linked to the enrolled grade level CCSS and address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student.	Yes / No

3. The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measureable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum	The student (a) requires extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and support that is not of a temporary or transient nature and (b) uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate, and transfer skills across multiple settings.	Yes / No
--	---	----------

**The student is eligible to participate in the Alternate Assessment if all responses above are marked Yes.**



## Appendix C:

### Crosswalk Templates for Participation Criteria Comparisons for States with and without AA-MAS

General Crosswalk Format for States to Compare Smarter Balanced Participation Criteria with States' Previous Policies

Smarter Balanced Policy	State's Previous Policy	Differences to Note
<b>General Assessment</b>		
<p>All students enrolled in grades 3–8 and 11 are required to participate in the Smarter Balanced mathematics assessment except:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet the criteria for the mathematics alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards.</li> </ul> <p>All students enrolled in grades 3–8 and 11 are required to participate in the Smarter Balanced English language/literacy assessment except:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet the criteria for the English language/literacy alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards.</li> <li>ELLs who are enrolled for the first year in a U.S. school.</li> </ul>		
<b>Alternative Assessment Based on Modified Achievement Standards</b>		
Does not exist in Smarter Balanced assessment system		

Alternative Assessment Based on Alternate Achievement Standards		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student has a significant cognitive disability;</li> <li>• The student is learning content linked to (derived from) the Common Core State Standards; and</li> <li>• The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measureable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.</li> </ul>		

## Appendix D:

### Crosswalk Template for Embedded and Non-embedded Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations for Math

General Crosswalk Format for States to Compare Smarter Balanced Embedded Accommodations, Designated Supports, and Universal Tools with States' Previous Policies in Math

Smarter Balanced Accommodations, Designated Supports, and Universal Tools	State's Previous Similar Policy	Differences to Note
<b>Accommodations</b>		
<b>American Sign Language (ASL)</b> – allowed for math items in their entirety; test content is translated into ASL video; ASL human signer and the signed test content are viewed on the same screen.		
<b>Braille</b> – raised dot code that individuals read with the fingertips		
<b>Designated Supports</b>		
<b>Color Contrast</b> – screen background or font color can be adjusted, based on student needs or preferences		
<b>Masking</b> – content that is not of immediate need or that may be distracting to the student is blocked off		
<b>Text-to-speech</b> – allowed for math items in their entirety; text is read aloud to student via embedded technology		
<b>Translated Test Directions</b> – Translation of mathematics test directions is a language support available prior to beginning the actual test items. Students can see test directions in another language.		

<b>Translations (Glossary or Stacked)</b> – allowed for math items; full translations are provided above the original item		
<b>Turn off Any Universal Tools</b> – any universal tools that might be distracting or that students do not need to use or are unable to use are turned off		
<b>Universal Tools</b>		
<b>Breaks</b> – number of items per session is flexibly defined based on the student's need		
<b>Calculator</b> – for calculator-allowed items only; embedded on-screen digital calculator		
<b>Digital Notepad</b> – item-specific tool in which notes can be entered electronically by the student		
<b>English Glossary</b> – grade- and context-appropriate definitions of specific construct-irrelevant terms shown in English on the screen via a pop-up window		
<b>Expandable Passages</b> – stimulus can be expanded so that it takes up a larger portion of the screen		
<b>Highlighter</b> – digital tool for marking desired item questions, item answers, or parts of these with a color		
<b>Keyboard Navigation</b> – navigation throughout the test can be accomplished via keyboard strokes		
<b>Mark for Review</b> – student can flag items for future review during a section of the assessment		

<b>Math Tools</b> – includes embedded ruler, embedded protractor; needed tools are available only with items for which their use is appropriate		
<b>Strikethrough</b> – student can cross out answer options		
<b>Writing Tools</b> – includes bold, italic, underline, indent, cut, paste, spell check, bullets, undo/redo		
<b>Zoom</b> – text or other graphics in a window or frame are made to appear larger on the screen		

General Crosswalk Format for States to Compare Smarter Balanced Non-embedded Accommodations, Designated Supports, and Universal Tools with States' Previous Policies in Math

Smarter Balanced Accommodations, Designated Supports, and Universal Tools	State's Previous Similar Policy	Differences to Note
<b>Accommodations</b>		
<b>Abacus</b> – used in place of scratch paper for students who typically use an abacus		
<b>Alternate Response Option</b> – adapted keyboards, large keyboards, StickyKeys, MouseKeys, FilterKeys, adapted mouse, touch screen, head wand, and switches are examples		
<b>Calculator</b> – non-embedded calculator for students needed a special calculator such as a braille calculator or a talking calculator		
<b>Multiplication Table</b> – allowed for math items for grade 4 and above; a paper-based single digit (1-9) multiplication table		

<b>Print on Demand</b> – paper copies of stimuli or items		
<b>Speech-to-text</b> – voice recognition allows students to use their voices as input devices to the computer, to dictate responses or give commands		
<b>Designated Supports</b>		
<b>Color Contrast</b> – online items may be printed with different colors		
<b>Color Overlays</b> – color transparencies are placed over a paper-based assessment		
<b>Magnification</b> – size of specific areas of the screen may be adjusted by the student with an assistive technology device		
<b>Read Aloud</b> – for math items, text is read aloud to the student by a trained and qualified human reader who follows the administration guidelines provided in the <i>Smarter Balanced Test Administration Manual</i>		
<b>Scribe</b> – students dictate their responses to a human who records verbatim what they dictate		
<b>Separate Setting</b> – test location is altered so the student is tested in a setting different from that made available to most students		
<b>Translations (Glossaries)</b> – for selected construct irrelevant terms in math items		
<b>Universal Tools</b>		



<p><b>Breaks</b> – number of items per session is flexibly defined based on the student’s need</p>		
<p><b>Scratch Paper</b> – paper provided for student to make notes, write computations, or record responses; scratch paper is collected and securely destroyed at the end of each session</p>		

## Appendix E:

### Crosswalk Template for Embedded and Non-embedded Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations for ELA

General Crosswalk Format for States to Compare Smarter Balanced Embedded Accommodations, Designated Supports, and Universal Tools with States' Previous Policies in ELA

Smarter Balanced Accommodations, Designated Supports, and Universal Tools	State's Previous Similar Policy	Differences to Note
<b>Accommodations</b>		
<b>American Sign Language (ASL)</b> – allowed for listening items; test content is translated into ASL video; ASL human signer and the signed test content are viewed on the same screen		
<b>Braille</b> – raised dot code that individuals read with the fingertips		
<b>Closed Captioning</b> – allowed for listening items; printed text that appears on the computer screen as audio materials are presented		
<b>Text-to-Speech</b> – for reading passages grades 6-8 and 11; text is read aloud to student via embedded technology		
<b>Designated Supports</b>		
<b>Color Contrast</b> – screen background or font color can be adjusted, based on student needs or preferences		
<b>Masking</b> – content that is not of immediate need or that may be distracting to the student is blocked off		
<b>Text-to-speech</b> – allowed for items, not passages; text is read		

aloud to the student via embedded technology		
<b>Turn off Any Universal Tools</b> – any universal tools that might be distracting or that students do not need to use or are unable to use are turned off		
<b>Universal Tools</b>		
<b>Breaks</b> – number of items per session is flexibly defined based on the student's need		
<b>Digital Notepad</b> – item specific tool in which notes can be entered electronically by the student		
<b>English Dictionary</b> – for performance task full-writes only		
<b>English Glossary</b> – grade- and context-appropriate definitions of specific construct-irrelevant terms shown in English on the screen via a pop-up window		
<b>Expandable Passages</b> – stimulus can be expanded so that it takes up a larger portion of the screen		
<b>Global Notes</b> – for performance task full-writes only; notepad in which notes can be entered electronically by the student		
<b>Highlighter</b> – digital tool for marking desired text, item questions, item answers, or parts of these with a color		
<b>Keyboard Navigation</b> – navigation throughout the test can be accomplished via keyboard strokes		

<b>Mark for Review</b> – student can flag items for future review during a section of the assessment		
<b>Spell Check</b> – allowed for student-generated responses for selected items		
<b>Strikethrough</b> – student can cross out answer options		
<b>Writing Tools</b> – includes bold, italic, underline, indent, cut, paste, spell check, bullets, undo/redo		
<b>Zoom</b> – text or other graphics in a window or frame are made to appear larger on the screen		

General Crosswalk Format for States to Compare Smarter Balanced Non-embedded Accommodations, Designated Supports, and Universal Tools with States' Previous Policies in ELA

Smarter Balanced Accommodations, Designated Supports, and Universal Tools	State's Previous Similar Policy	Differences to Note
<b>Accommodations</b>		
<b>Alternate response option</b> – adapted keyboards, large keyboards, StickyKeys, MouseKeys, FilterKeys, adapted mouse, touch screen, head wand, and switches are examples		
<b>Print on demand</b> – paper copies of stimuli or items		
<b>Read Aloud</b> – allowed for ELA passages, grades 6-8 and 11; text is read aloud to the student by a trained and qualified human reader who follows the administration guidelines		
<b>Scribe</b> –for writing; students dictate their responses to a		

human who records verbatim what they dictate		
<b>Speech-to-text</b> – voice recognition allows students to use their voices as input devices to the computer, to dictate responses or give commands		
<b>Designated Supports</b>		
<b>Bilingual Dictionary</b> – allowed for ELA-performance task full writes; a bilingual/dual language word-to-word dictionary can be provided		
<b>Color Contrast</b> – online items may be printed with different colors		
<b>Color Overlays</b> – color transparencies are placed over a paper-based assessment		
<b>Magnification</b> – size of specific areas of the screen may be adjusted by the student with an assistive technology device		
<b>Read Aloud</b> – allowed for ELA items, but not reading passages; text is read aloud to the student by a trained and qualified human reader who follows the administration guidelines provided in the <i>Smarter Balanced Test Administration Manual</i>		
<b>Scribe</b> – for non-writing items; students dictate their responses to a human who records verbatim what they dictate		
<b>Separate Setting</b> – test location is altered so the student is tested in a setting different from that made available to most students		
<b>Universal Tools</b>		

<b>Breaks</b> – number of items per session is flexibly defined based on the student’s need		
<b>English Dictionary</b> – allowed for ELA-performance task full writes		
<b>Scratch Paper</b> – paper provided for student to make notes, write computations, or record responses; scratch paper is collected and securely destroyed at the end of each session		
<b>Thesaurus</b> – allowed for ELA performance task full writes; provides synonyms of terms while a student interacts with text included in the assessment		



## Appendix F:

### Resources for Districts and Schools

Resource 1: Considering Student Designated Supports and Accommodations Needs

Resource 2: Do's and Don'ts When Selecting Designated Supports and Accommodations

Research 3: Working Together to Address Student Needs

Resource 4: Designated Supports and Accommodations from the Student's Perspective

Resource 5: Parent Input on Designated Supports and Accommodations

Resource 6: Designated Supports and Accommodations Journal for Teachers

Resource 7: After-Test Questions

Resource 8: Planning for Designated Supports and Accommodations

Resource 9: Questions to Guide Evaluation at the School or District Level

Resource 10: Glossary

## Resource 1:

### Considering Student Accessibility and Accommodations Needs

*Use this form to determine whether a student has accessibility or accommodations needs that might suggest that the student is eligible for designated supports and/or accommodations.*

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Person filling out the form: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions	Yes (please describe)	No	N/A
Can you comment on the student's usability, accessibility, and accommodations needs?			
Are you aware of the student's performance on other tests?			
Are you aware of any designated supports and/or accommodations that the student already uses?			

Are you aware of any aspects of the student's home life (culture) that may impact the designated supports and accommodations selection process (taboos, gestures, kinesthetics, etc.)?			
Do you know how much time the student has spent in your state? Are there mobility issues?			
Can you comment on the student's overall oral English language proficiency and level of English literacy?			
Are you aware of the language(s) the student speaks in his/her family? If so, please specify the language(s) and the level of the student's oral proficiency and literacy in the language(s).			
Are there educational resources available to the student in his/her native language if it is other than English?			
Does the student have any disability-related needs (e.g., use of assistive technology, braille, magnifier, wheelchair, etc.)? If so, please list these needs and			

comment on how they will be taken into account during testing.			
Was the student enrolled in special education programs prior to transferring to this school? If so, please describe.			
Are there any other aspects of the student's characteristics (time spent in the U.S., visual acuity, reading speed, etc.) that should be considered when selecting designated supports and accommodations for the student?			

## RESOURCE 2:

### DO'S AND DON'TS WHEN SELECTING DESIGNATED SUPPORTS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

<b>Do...</b> make designated supports and accommodations decisions based on individualized needs (e.g., the student's English language proficiency, disability needs).	<b>Don't...</b> make designated supports and accommodations decisions based on whatever is easiest to do (e.g., preferential seating).
<b>Do...</b> select designated supports and accommodations that reduce the effect of the barrier (e.g., disability needs, English language proficiency) to access content and demonstrate learning.	<b>Don't...</b> select designated supports and accommodations unrelated to documented student learning needs or are intended to give students an unfair advantage.
<b>Do...</b> be specific about the "Where, When, Who, and How" of providing designated supports and accommodations.	<b>Don't...</b> assume that all instructional designated supports and accommodations are appropriate for use on assessments.
<b>Do...</b> refer to Smarter Balanced usability, accessibility, and accommodations policies and understand implications of selections.	<b>Don't...</b> simply indicate a designated support or accommodation will be provided "as appropriate" or "as necessary."
<b>Do...</b> evaluate designated supports and accommodations used by the student.	<b>Don't...</b> check every designated support or accommodation possible on a checklist simply to be "safe."
<b>Do...</b> get input about designated supports and accommodations from teachers, parents, and students, and use it to make decisions at team meetings.	<b>Don't...</b> assume the same designated supports and accommodations remain appropriate year after year.
<b>Do...</b> provide designated supports and accommodations for assessments routinely used for classroom instruction.	<b>Don't...</b> provide a designated support or accommodation for the first time on the day of a test.
<b>Do...</b> select designated supports and accommodations based on specific individual needs in each content area.	<b>Don't...</b> assume certain designated supports and accommodations are appropriate for every student in every content area.

## Resource 3:

### Working Together to Address Student Needs

Directions: Working in small groups, brainstorm the tasks necessary to ensure that students in your school get the designated supports and accommodations they need. Then, as a group, agree on the person who should be responsible to make sure each task is accomplished.

#### Discussion Issues

1. Does everyone have a task to do? Do some people have too many or too few tasks?
2. Do your assigned tasks align with your perceived role?
3. What appear to be similarities and differences between perceived roles and responsibilities of the decision-making team members?
4. To what extent does collaboration among decision-making team members occur in your building or district? What are some of the barriers or obstacles?
5. Are our boundaries clear? What are you doing now that you feel may be “out of your jurisdiction”?
6. What are some opportunities or barriers that can either facilitate or hinder future opportunities for general, ESL/bilingual, and special education teacher collaboration? (consider all the language groups in your schools)
7. Who is responsible for making entries in the student’s ISAAP and TIDE or IEP or 504 Plan?

Tasks	Who Is Responsible?
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>


Adapted from *Delaware Accommodation Activity Sheets*, Delaware Department of Education.



**Resource 4:****Designated Supports and Accommodations from the Student's Perspective**

*Use this questionnaire to collect information about needed designated supports and accommodations from the student's perspective. The questions can be completed independently or as part of an interview process. Whatever method is used however, be certain that the student understands the concept of a designated support or accommodation, providing examples as necessary. Also, provide a list of possible designated supports and accommodations to give the student a good understanding of the range of supports that may be available.*

1. What things in school are easiest for you?

---

2. Tell me something in class that you do well.

---

*The things you said you can do well above are your strengths. For example, you may have mentioned vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, listening, drawing, or doing your homework as some things you can do well. If you said you really like the subject, have a good memory, and work hard in class, these are also examples of your strengths.*

3. What things in school are hardest?

---

4. Tell me something you do in class that is hard. Why?

---

*The things you said were hardest are areas you need to work on during the school year. For example, you might have listed reading the class textbook, taking tests, listening, remembering new information, doing homework, or doing work in groups. These are all things in which a designated support or accommodation may be helpful for you.*

5. In the list that follows, write down all of the challenges you currently have related to learning. Then look at a list of designated supports and accommodations. Next to each class, write down what designated support(s) and/or accommodation(s) you think might be helpful for you.
6. Do you have any concerns about using a designated support or accommodation?

---

## Challenge List

Things that are hard

Designated supports and accommodations

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

This questionnaire was adapted from *A Student's Guide to the IEP* by the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (<http://nichcy.org/pubs/stuguide/st1book.htm>). Retrieved July 28, 2005.

## Resource 5:

### Parent Input on Designated Supports and Accommodations

Questions parents should ask about designated supports and accommodations in instruction and on assessments:

#### About Instruction

- What instructional support does my child need to access and reach the Common Core State Standards?
- How can my child and I advocate to receive designated supports and/or accommodations not yet provided in instruction?
- Are the designated supports and/or accommodations my child is receiving in instruction meant to be a temporary support? If yes, what is the plan to help determine when to phase them out?
- How are the various staff members who work with my child providing designated supports and/or accommodations? (across regular, special education, or other staff)
- What is the setting or model of program support my child receives for instruction?

#### About Designated Supports and Accommodations

- What are the tests my child needs to take, what do they measure, and for what purpose is each given?
- Are the designated supports and/or accommodations allowed on Smarter Balanced tests also provided for district tests?
- Can my child participate in part of an assessment with or without designated supports and/or accommodations?
- Are there consequences for allowing certain changes to how my child participates in a test? How will my child's test scores count?
- Do consequences of designated supports and/or accommodations vary by type of test?

#### Questions for Assessment

Is the need for each designated support documented in my child's Individual Student Assessment Accessibility Profile (ISAAP) or each accommodation documented in my child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan?

Are there too many or too few designated supports and/or accommodations being provided?

What are my child's preferences for specific designated support and accommodations?

If my child needs designated supports and/or accommodations, how will they be provided?

If a designated support or accommodation used in instruction is not allowed on a test, is there another allowed option to support the student? If yes, has it been documented and tried in instruction first? If no, how is my child being prepared to work without the designated support or accommodation before the test? What evidence is there to know if my child was able to access or use the designated support or accommodation provided?

**Other questions you may have**

Adapted from *Minnesota Manual for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in Instruction and Assessment*. Questions are based in part on questions and content from: NCLD's Parent Advocacy Brief NCLB: Determining Appropriate Assessment Accommodations for Students with Disabilities, and Testing Students With Disabilities: Practical Strategies for Complying With District and State Requirements, 2nd ed. (2003) By Martha Thurlow, Judy Elliott, and James Ysseldyke.

**Resource 6:****Designated Supports and Accommodations Journal for Teachers**

One way to keep track of what designated supports and accommodations work for students is to support each student in keeping a journal. The journal lets the student be “in charge” and could be kept up to date through regular consultation with the teacher. The journal could address the following:

- designated supports and accommodations used by the student in the classroom and on tests;
- test and assignment results when designated supports and accommodations are used and not used;
- student’s perception of how well the designated supports and accommodations work;
- effective combinations of designated supports and accommodations;
- difficulties of designated supports and accommodations use; and
- perceptions of teachers and others about how the designated supports and accommodations appear to be working.

*In the spaces provided below, design and organize the use of a designated supports and accommodations journal for one of your students. Answer these questions:*

1. What would you include as headings for the journal?

---

---

---

---

2. When would the student make entries in the journal, and what types of support would the student need to make these entries?

---



---



---



---

3. With whom would the student share journal entries, and when would it be done?

---



---



---



---

*Use this chart to track different aspects of how a student uses a designated support or accommodation in your classroom. This will help inform decision making on assessment designated supports and accommodations.*

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What designated support(s) and/or accommodation(s) does the student use in the classroom? List them in the chart. Then follow the questions in the chart.

Questions	List designated supports and accommodations				
1. Is it noted in the student's ISAAP?					

2. For what task(s) is it used? (e.g., task type* or content/standard)					
3. Does the student use it for that task every time? Note how often.					
4. Does the student use it alone or with assistance? (e.g., aide, peers?)					
5. Notes: (e.g., does one designated support or accommodation seem more effective when used with another on a task, etc.)					

\*How is taking in or responding to information presented, solving or organizing information accomplished, specific content being learned or assessed, etc.?



## Resource 7:

### After-Test Questions

*Use this form after a test to interview a student about the designated support(s) and/or accommodation(s) provided, used, whether it was useful and whether it should be used again. Also note any adjustments or difficulties experienced by the student in either how the designated support or accommodation was administered or in using the same designated support or accommodation during the assessment.*

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Designated support or accommodation used: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions	Test Taken (List)			
<b>Was the designated support or accommodation used?</b>  Comments:	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
<b>Was the designated support or accommodation useful?</b>  Comments:	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
<b>Were there any difficulties with the designated support or accommodation? (Are adjustments needed)?</b>  Comments:	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
<b>Should the designated support or accommodation be used again?</b>	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No

Comments:				
-----------	--	--	--	--

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_

## Resource 8:

### Planning for Designated Supports and Accommodations

#### Student Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Case Information

Teacher(s): \_\_\_\_\_

School year: \_\_\_\_\_

Building/school: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person who enters the student's designated supports and accommodations: \_\_\_\_\_

Designated supports and accommodations that the student needs for this assessment and date arranged:

Designated Supports and Accommodations	Date Arranged
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
Comments: _____	_____

Person responsible for arranging designated supports and accommodations and due date:

Person Responsible Due Date	Date Arranged
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
Comments: _____	_____

---

---

Room assignment for assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Planners for this process (signatures): \_\_\_\_\_

## Resource 9:

### Questions to Guide Evaluation at the School or District Level

Discuss the following questions with other decision-making team members:

- Are there procedures in place to ensure test administrators adhere to directions for the administration of designated supports and accommodations?
- In what ways can you use assessment data and designated supports/accommodations data to ensure appropriate designated supports and accommodations are being used?
- In what ways are you currently evaluating the methods of students being provided designated supports and accommodations? How can you improve these methods?

## Resource 10: Glossary

**Accommodations** are changes in procedures or materials that increase equitable access during the Smarter Balanced assessments by generating valid assessment results for students who need them and allowing these students to show what they know and can do.

**Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT)** is a process during which, based on student responses, the computer program adjusts the difficulty of questions throughout the assessment. For example, a student who answers a question correctly will receive a more challenging item, while an incorrect answer generates an easier question. By adapting to the student as the assessment is taking place, these assessments present an individually tailored set of questions to each student and can quickly identify which skills students have mastered.

**Designated supports** for the Smarter Balanced assessments are those features that are available for use by any student (including English language learners, students with disabilities, and English language learners with disabilities) for whom the need has been indicated by an educator or team of educators (with parent/guardian and student input as appropriate).

**English language learners (ELLs)**, also referred to as Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, are students whose native language is not English and who do not yet possess sufficient English language proficiency to fully access curriculum that is in English.

**English language learners with disabilities (ELLs with disabilities)** are students whose native language is not English, who do not yet possess sufficient English language proficiency to fully access content that is in English, and who have disabilities as identified through IDEA or Section 504.

**Individual Student Assessment Accessibility Profile (ISAAP)** is used to capture and communicate a student's access needs and the designation of supports for the Smarter Balanced interim and summative assessments. The selection of appropriate tools, designated supports and/or accommodations that best match the student's needs can be made by one or more school staff, including teachers, administrators and other specialists who work with the student. Districts can customize the ISAAP and the process for completing an ISAAP according to local needs and resources.

**Students with disabilities** are students who are eligible to receive services identified through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504.

**Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE)** is used to upload student files, add students, and designate the specific universal tools, designated supports, and/or accommodations that need to be turned on (or off) for the student when the assessment is presented via technology.

**Universal design** is an approach based on principles that address policies and practices that are intended to improve access to learning and assessments for all students. Universal design principles are important to the development and review of assessments because some assessment designs pose barriers that make it difficult for some students to show what they know. When universal design techniques are employed, educators can gain a more accurate understanding of what students know and can do.

**Universal tools** are access features that are available to all students based on student preference and selection.

## Appendix G:

### Communications Planning Resources Templates

#### Communications Planning Template – Messages and Methods

**Note:** The state department divisions listed and the communication targets should be changed to meet your state’s needs. Each cell (when appropriate) should be filled with information on the messages to be communicated and the methods used to communicate.

	State Department Divisions Supporting Communications Plan			
Communication Target	Assessment Division	Special Education Division	Title III Division	Curriculum & Instruction Division
District Superintendent				
District Coordinators				
Other District Staff				
School Principal				
School Staff				
Families/Parents				
Community Media				

## Communications Interaction Plan Template

**Note:** The list across the top (district, school, families, community) and the communication targets should be changed to meet your state's needs. Each cell (when appropriate) should be filled with information on to whom (or which division) in your state the communication should be directed.

	District, School, Families, and Community Members			
Communication Target	District Personnel	School Personnel	Families	Community Members
Questions about Guidelines				
Implementation Feedback				
Data on Use of Non-embedded Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations				



## Appendix H:

### Developing a Timeline for Training

Activity	Start Date	End Date	Notes
Begin planning the training			
Determine the audience for training			
Determine what information the training should convey			
Determine the training format			
Develop training content			
Prepare needed materials			
Hold the training			
Evaluate the training			
Administer Smarter Balanced assessments			
Evaluate the implementation of the training in improving decision making			
Project end			